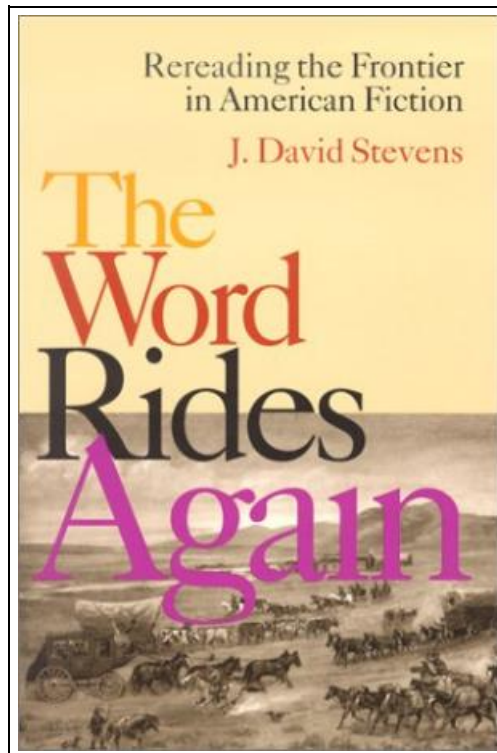


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Ohio University Press, United States, 2002. Hardback. Condition: New. 1. Language: English . Brand New Book. With much recent scholarship polarizing frontier novels into popular and literary camps, *The Word Rides Again* challenges the critical orthodoxy that such works have little in common, arguing instead that formulaic Western fictions can subtly (and even subversively) share cultural concerns with more highbrow brethren. Each chapter focuses on a writer who has traditionally been classified as either popular or artistic, reading a representative fictional work against prevailing scholarly trends. In this manner, Bret Harte's sentimental stories become gender-bending experiments in which women assume male roles and even enjoy lesbian relationships. Owen Wister's *The Virginian* is transmuted from a misogynistic diatribe into a complex meditation on the peculiarly American relation of violence to male identity. And even Willa Cather's *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, rather than the apotheosis of a religious leader, becomes a somewhat standard version of the popular frontier story. *The Word Rides Again* represents a significant departure from more traditional studies of frontier literature. It reaffirms the continuum between popular and literary texts and explores the ways that frontier novels have echoed, endorsed, and extended each other from the inception of the genre.

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